

Case Study

Human Proteome Organization 12th Annual Congress

The Human Proteome Organization 12th Annual World Congress was held from 14th (Sat.) to 18th (Wed.) Sept. 2013, at PACIFICO Yokohama. Following the meeting, Prof. Hisashi Hirano, Congress Co-Chair of the Organizing Committee sent comments on the success of the Congress.

1. The Human Proteome Organization (HUPO) World Congress was held in Japan for the first time. What was the significance of holding this event in Japan and its results?

The HUPO World Congress is held annually. This is the third time for the congress to be held in Asia, following on from China and Korea, and the first time to be held in Japan. There were 1,580 participants from 43 countries at this congress. Participants from overseas numbered 649 while there were 931 participants from Japan. Lectures were given by 195 researchers, of whom 37 were Japanese. Special invited guest speakers gave 11 lectures while poster presentations numbered more than 900. Japan is a world leader in the field of proteome research that comprehensively analyzes expression of proteins, functions and relationships between proteins and diseases. Many Japanese researchers gave presentations at the congress thus drawing attention to the results of Japanese study in this particular field. At the congress, researchers from throughout the world were able to interact directly and this was helpful for exchanging information which could not be gained from academic papers alone. I believe this congress provided an opportunity for the further development of proteomics both in Japan and in the international arena. Care was taken to provide opportunities for young researchers to give presentations so this congress played an important role not only in fostering young researchers but also in promoting internationalization. On the other hand, corporations with a track record in proteomics-related fields (98 sponsors and 66 exhibitors) cooperated in conducting this congress. The congress provided opportunities for attendees to gather technical information together with opportunities for sponsors to provide information about their equipment and reagents.



2. This congress in Yokohama appears to have been a prime opportunity to disseminate to the world the latest results from Japanese researchers on proteomics in order to enhance understanding of health and disease in human beings and utilize this understanding in diagnoses and treatment. What were some of the most impressive moments and aspects of the congress?

Nobel prize recipients and candidates presented the results of their latest findings at this Congress. A lot of the presentations were very impressive. On the other hand, at this congress, various ways were devised for fostering young researchers. First, the participation fee for students was greatly reduced. Also, 28 young researchers from Japan and from overseas were invited to the congress and a training course on proteomics was held over the course of four days. Furthermore, two educational lectures were held on proteomics and clinical proteomics, each one-day-long. This was of special significance for fostering young researchers.



Just before the congress opened, a public lecture (in Japanese) titled “Proteins and Disease” was held in Yokohama and 135 citizens attended. That was quite memorable.

During the congress, we made efforts to provide support whenever it was needed for participants with a disability though the allocation of support staff, by lending personal handyphone system (PHS) terminals to such participants and so on. After the congress finished, we received thank-you messages from these participants and were touched by their thoughtfulness.

On the third day of the Congress, the powerful typhoon Man-yi hit the Japanese archipelago. We were most impressed that despite inclement conditions, a large number of participants still attended the Congress and listened intently to the lectures.

3. We heard from participants in the Congress that as well as the program content being excellent the social events were extremely popular. Could you tell us what kind of ideas you implemented regarding this?

At HUPO2013 there were many opportunities for networking such as the welcoming party, congress concert, banquet, dinner for special invited guest speakers, and evening seminars. With regard to the congress concert, two years before the congress date we made a request to the conductor for their services in the concert, booked a professional orchestra and checked out the venue, etc. Buoyed by the enjoyable atmosphere of the concert, attendees were able to mingle and become acquainted with each other. Also, at the banquet after the concert, with the support of the Yokohama Convention & Visitors Bureau (YCVB), we were able to provide some traditional Japanese entertainment that was also conducive in facilitating exchanges.



4. What were your impressions of the support system offered by the City of Yokohama and the YCVB? What kinds of things were helpful to you as organizer of the symposium? Could you please tell us of any expectations you may have for Yokohama as a venue for symposia in the future?

As well as helping to decide on the date to hold the congress, giving advice about how to manage the Congress and providing financial support, YCVB also set up a City information desk for the duration of the Congress. If we had not received such advice and support from YCVB, I don't think the Congress could have been successful. We were able to raise more financial sponsorship for the congress from sponsors than we initially anticipated but during the stages prior to and during preparations, we were rather worried as we weren't sure how much we could raise. However, having the option of receiving financial support from YCVB was very reassuring. Also, being able to go on an observation tour of the venues for holding social events one year before the congress was very helpful. We would like to offer our sincere thanks.

